

SPRING 2003

## S&TS 492/692 POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH

Wednesdays 10:10 a.m. – 12:05 p.m.

Warren Hall 261

Instructor:

Prof. Elizabeth Toon

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Office hours: W 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.,

F 11 a.m. – 12 noon, & by appt.

Writing Consultant:

Stephanie Turner

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Who is responsible for the public's health? Both now and in the past, the answer to that question has been a source of bitter debate. In this course, we will examine the history and current situation of American public health, which is simultaneously a field of scientific activity, a vehicle for social reform, and a site of political controversy. Course readings and discussions will focus on the evolution of this balance of science, reform, and politics in the United States, but will occasionally include some material on public health in other national and cultural contexts.

Prerequisites:

At least one course in Science and Technology Studies/Biology and Society.

Course materials:

Four books, all available in paperback at the Cornell Campus Store, are required for this class:

- Charles E. Rosenberg, The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866, with a New Afterword (University of Chicago Press, 1987 [orig. publ. 1962])
- Judith Walzer Leavitt, Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health (Beacon, 1996)
- Keith Wailoo, Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health (University of North Carolina Press, 2001)
- Steven Epstein, Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge (University of California Press, 1996)

Other readings will be in a course packet, available at the Campus Store, or will be distributed by the instructor.

Course structure and organization:

Each class will be a seminar discussion guided by the instructor, with an occasional brief introductory lecture (especially in the first half of the course). You are expected to have done and considered the readings before class, so that you can contribute to our discussions.

The first week of the course will introduce, for consideration throughout the rest of the course, various definitions of public health. January 29 through March 12 will provide a broad historical overview of the development of public health science, practices, and institutions in the U.S. (with reference to related developments in Europe and in Canada). The weeks following will focus on specific recent and contemporary topics and debates, and the readings for those

weeks will draw heavily on contemporary analyses of public health policy and its social context.

**Evaluation:**

Final grades for the course will be based on the following:

- two medium-length essays (20% each).....40%
- final essay .....30%
- in-class essay .....5%
- participation (including prep of discussion questions).....25%

**Papers:** There are three papers due in this course – two are medium-length essays (1800 - 2000 words each), and the third, the final essay, is somewhat longer (2100 – 2400 words). None of these are research papers; all essays are to respond to questions given out by the instructor.

For at least one of your medium length essays and for your final essay, you will:

- turn in a draft version of your essay to the postdoctoral fellow/writing consultant (Stephanie Turner, contact info above) for this course;
- meet with ST to discuss your draft, writing issues, and revision strategies; and
- turn in a revised version of your paper (together with the draft w/ ST’s comments on it) to the instructor (ET).

You **must** follow this procedure for **ONE** of the medium-length essays and for the final essay, and are **strongly encouraged** to do so for the other medium-length essay. We will discuss this procedure in more detail in the first few weeks of class; please also see the course schedule. You may **NOT** submit papers by email without *prior* permission from me.

**In-class essay:** At the beginning of class on Wednesday, April 2, I will hand out an essay question related to the reading assignment for that day, and you will spend about 25 minutes writing a response.

**Participation:** Participation is a vital element of this seminar. While I will not formally keep track of attendance, missing several classes will by necessity detract from your overall participation in course discussions, and thus your participation grade, and thus your course grade. Students will sign up to prepare discussion questions for class sessions, and these discussion questions will count towards your participation grade as well.

**Absences:** If you must miss an in-class essay or a paper deadline because of illness, family emergency, or religious observance, contact me by email or voice mail **as soon as possible – within 24 hours at the latest** – to make arrangements to make up the missed work.

**Academic integrity:** I expect every student in this course to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. While it is appropriate for you to discuss assignments with each other, all work submitted by you must be your own work, done for this course (and not for previous or other courses) unless you have my permission to modify or extend other work. The only collaborative project in this course is the creation of discussion questions. In your papers, when you draw on ideas or materials created by someone else, you must cite the sources of these ideas and materials appropriately and thoroughly. (If you have any questions about attribution, quoting, and citing, please speak to me or ST; we will also cover this issue in class.) If any of your work violates the Code of Academic Integrity, I reserve the right to give you a zero (not an F, but no points at all) for that assignment and, if necessary, to pursue further action through the University.

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE MEETINGS, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

[INST] = will be distributed by instructor; [CP] = in course packets (available at Campus Store)

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22

*Course introduction*

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

*Epidemics and the beginnings of a modern public health infrastructure*

- Dorothy Porter, "Introduction: Changing definitions of the history of public health," pp. 1-8 of her Health, Civilization, and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times (Routledge, 1999) [INST]
- Charles E. Rosenberg, The Cholera Years (1987 [orig. publ. 1962]), Introduction, Chs. 1-5 (pp. 1 - 98)

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

*Creating a modern public health infrastructure: social responsibility and political interests*

- Rosenberg, The Cholera Years, Chs. 6 - 13 and 1987 Afterword (pp. 101 - 242)
- "Report of the Committee on Sanitary Condition of the Homes of the Poor, presented to the Council January 11, 1893," pp. 34-44 of the Fifteenth Annual Report and Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Charity Organization Society of Buffalo, N.Y. for the Year 1892 (For the Society, 1892) [CP1]

**TOPIC FOR PAPER 1 WILL BE DISTRIBUTED**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11: DRAFT VERSION OF PAPER 1 DUE TO ST BY 12 NOON**

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

*Applied science and social power: Bacteriology and the "New Public Health" in theory and practice*

- Judith Walzer Leavitt, Typhoid Mary: Captive to the Public's Health (1996), Prologue, Introduction, and Chs. 1-4 (pp. 1 -125)
- C. V. Chapin, "The fetich of disinfection," *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* 47 (1906): 574-580 [CP1]

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18: REVISED VERSION OF PAPER 1 DUE TO ET BY 4 P.M.**

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

*Applied science and social power: Bacteriology and the "New Public Health," continued*

- Leavitt, Typhoid Mary, Chs. 5 - 7 and Conclusion (pp. 126 - 254)
- A War on Consumption [pamphlet] (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1912) [INST]

**TOPIC FOR PAPER 2 WILL BE DISTRIBUTED**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

*Social reform and social medicine: infant welfare, eugenics, and the expansion of professional and state authority in the interwar years*

- Alexandra Minna Stern, "Making better babies: Public health and race betterment in Indiana, 1920 - 1935," *Am. J. Public Health* 92 (2002): 742-752 [CP1]
- Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Saving babies and sterilizing mothers: Eugenics and welfare politics in the interwar United States," *Social Politics* 4 (1997): 136-153 [CP1]
- Logan Clendening, "Hygeia vs. Æsclepius," *American Mercury*, May 1932, pp. 28-37 [CP1]
- Alan Derickson, "'Health for three-thirds of the nation': Public health advocacy of universal access to medical care in the United States," *Am. J. Public Health* 92 (2002) 180 - 191 [CP1]

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28: DRAFT VERSION OF PAPER 2 DUE TO ST BY 12 NOON**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5**

*Race and gender politics in national campaigns and local public health work*

- Keith Wailoo, Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race and Health (University of North Carolina, 2001), Introduction and Ch. 1 - 2 (pp. 1 - 83)
- Allan M. Brandt, "'Shadow on the Land': Thomas Parran and the New Deal," Ch. 4 (pp. 122-160) of his No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States since 1880 (Oxford Univ. Press, 1987) [INST]
- Susan L. Smith, "Neither victim nor villain: Nurse Eunice Rivers, the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, and public health work," *Journal of Women's History* 8 (1996): 95-113 [CP1]

**MONDAY, MARCH 10: REVISED VERSION OF PAPER 2 DUE TO ET BY 4 P.M.**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12**

*Public health, medical research, and political power at mid-century*

- David S. Jones, "The health care experiments at Many Farms: The Navajo, tuberculosis, and the limits of modern medicine, 1952 - 1962," *Bull. Hist. Med.* 76 (2002): 746-790 [CP1]
- Keith Wailoo, Dying in the City of the Blues, Chs. 3 - 7 and Conclusion (pp. 84 - 234)

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19:**

**NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26**

*From environment to lifestyle: The politics of health promotion*

- Robert Aronowitz, "The social construction of coronary heart disease risk factors," Ch. 5 (pp. 111-144) in his Making Sense of Illness: Science, Society, and Disease (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998) [CP2]
- Lisbeth Sachs, "Is there a pathology of prevention? The implications of visualizing the invisible in screening programs," *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 19 (1995): 503-525 [CP2]
- "Secretary's Foreword" and Chs. 1 and 2 (pp. vii-x, 3-18) from U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, Healthy People: The Surgeon-General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Government Printing Office, 1979) [CP2]
- "Introduction" and "A systematic approach to health improvement," from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2010, 2nd edition, volume I (Government Printing Office, 2000) available online at:

[http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/uih/uih\\_bw/uih\\_1.htm](http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/uih/uih_bw/uih_1.htm)  
[http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/uih/uih\\_bw/uih\\_2.htm](http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/uih/uih_bw/uih_2.htm)

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2**

*Prevention politics: Breast cancer prevention, screening, and activism*

- Leslie Reagan, "Engendering the dread disease: Women, men, and cancer," *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (1997): 1779 - 1787 [CP2]
- Daniel B. Kopans, "An overview of the breast cancer screening controversy," *J. Nat. Cancer Inst. Monographs* 22 (1997): 1-3 [CP2]
- Suzanne W. Fletcher, "Breast cancer screening among women in their forties: An overview of the issues," *J. Nat. Cancer Inst. Monographs* 22 (1997):5-9 [CP2]
- Maren Klawiter, "Racing for the cure, walking women, and toxic touring: Mapping cultures of action withing the Bay Area terrain of breast cancer," *Social Problems* 46 (1999): 104-126 [CP2]

**IN-CLASS ESSAY at the beginning of class**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9**

*Constructing and controlling epidemics in an age of risk factors*

*Guest speaker: Stephanie Turner, John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines*

- Gerald M. Oppenheimer, "In the eye of the storm: The epidemiological construction of AIDS," pp. 267-300 in Elizabeth Fee and Daniel M. Fox, eds., AIDS: The Burdens of History (University of California Press, 1988) [CP2]
- Ronald Bayer and Amy Fairchild-Carrino, "AIDS and the limits of control: public health orders, quarantine, and recalcitrant behavior," *Am. J. Public Health* 83 (1993): 1471-6 [CP2]
- Barron H. Lerner, "Catching patients: Tuberculosis and detention in the 1990s," *Chest* 115 (1999): 236-41 [CP2]

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16**

*Medical science and social justice: AIDS activists and health workers rethink prevention, treatment, and "good" science*

- Steven Epstein, Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge (University of California, 1996), Chs. 5 - 9

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23**

*Risky business? Regulation, activism, and public health policymaking*

*Guest speaker: Javier Lezaun, Science and Technology Studies*

- Marion Nestle, "Politics versus science: Opposing the Food Pyramid, 1991 - 1992," Ch 2 (pp. 51 - 66) [INST] and "'Deconstructing' dietary advice," Ch. 3 (pp. 67-92) [CP2] of her Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health (Univ. of California, 2002)
- Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, "Ol' Man River or Cancer Alley?" Ch. 8 (pp. 234-262) of their Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution (Univ. of California, 2002)

**TOPIC FOR FINAL ESSAY WILL BE DISTRIBUTED**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30**

*Topic to be chosen by class, readings TBA*

**MONDAY, MAY 5: DRAFT VERSION OF FINAL ESSAY DUE TO ST BY 12 NOON**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 14: REVISED VERSION OF FINAL ESSAY DUE TO ET BY 4 P.M.**